

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, BL

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS: COUNTRY PROBLEM ASSESSMENT PAPERS

1. THERE FOLLOWS TEXT OF A PAPER DESCRIBING NARCOTICS PROBLEM IN YOUR COUNTRY AS IT RELATES TO UNITED STATES DRUG SCENE. TREAT THIS AS SECRET-NO FOREIGN DISSEMINATION. THIS IS AN INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT WHICH HAS JUST BEEN PREPARED IN CONNECTION WITH FY 1976 PROGRAM REVIEWS. ANY COMMENTS, CORRECTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS ARISING FROM MISSION NARCOTICS COMMITTEE REVIEW OF THIS PAPER SHOULD BE SENT TO DEPARTMENT BY CABLE. EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVE AT MEXICO CITY REGIONAL NARCOTICS CONFERENCE MAY ALSO WISH DISCUSS THIS ASSESSMENT PAPER WITH WASHINGTON REPS THERE.

QUOTE: SIGNIFICANCE: BOLIVIA IS PROBABLY THE WORLD'S LARGEST PRODUCER OF COCA. COCA LEAF CULTIVATION AND CHEWING IS WIDESPREAD AND LEGAL. COCA AND THE ILLICIT PROCESSED AND SEMI-PROCESSED COCAINE EASILY FLOWS OVER BOLIVIA'S BORDERS TO PERU, CHILE, ARGENTINA, PARAGUAY, AND
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BRAZIL FROM WHERE MUCH OF IT IS LATER SHIPPED TO THE US. NUMEROUS COCAINE REFINERIES, MOST OF THEM UNSOPHISTICATED AND MAKESHIFT ARE LOCATED MAINLY IN RURAL AREAS.

SOME COCAINE MAY BE EXCHANGED FOR EUROPEAN HEROIN THAT IS THEN SENT TO THE US. HEROIN PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING IS NOT EXTENSIVE.

PROBLEM: BOLIVIA'S REMOTE AND RUGGED BORDERS ARE DIFFICULT TO PATROL. COCA LEAF CHEWING IS DEEPLY INGRAINED IN INDIAN LIFE. COCA IS THE LEADING CASH CROP IN MANY AREAS OF BOLIVA. IT ALSO IS A MAJOR CROP IN TERMS OF TAX REVENUE FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

ENFORCEMENT IS HINDERED BY BUDGETARY RESTRAINTS. THE NARCOTICS SECTION OF THE NATIONAL POLICE IS UNDERMANNED AND INEXPERIENCED. THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM WORKS VERY SLOWLY. MANY INDIVIDUALS ARRESTED ON DRUG VIOLATIONS ARE ABLE TO BUY THEIR WAY OUT OF THE CHARGE. SEVERAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE KNOWN TO BE INVOLVED IN THE TRAFFICKING.

ASSESSMENT: COOPERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT IS IMPROVING. EVEN SO, THE COCAINE TRAFFIC WILL BE DIFFICULT TO CONTROL BECAUSE OF THE SIZE OF THE COUNTRY, ITS RUGGED TOPOGRAPHY, ITS EXTENSIVE LAND BORDERS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS, ITS PRIMITIVE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM, AND THE GOVERNMENT'S LIMITED RESOURCES, BOTH HUMAN AND FINANCIAL. ENDQUOTE. KISSINGER

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